THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD
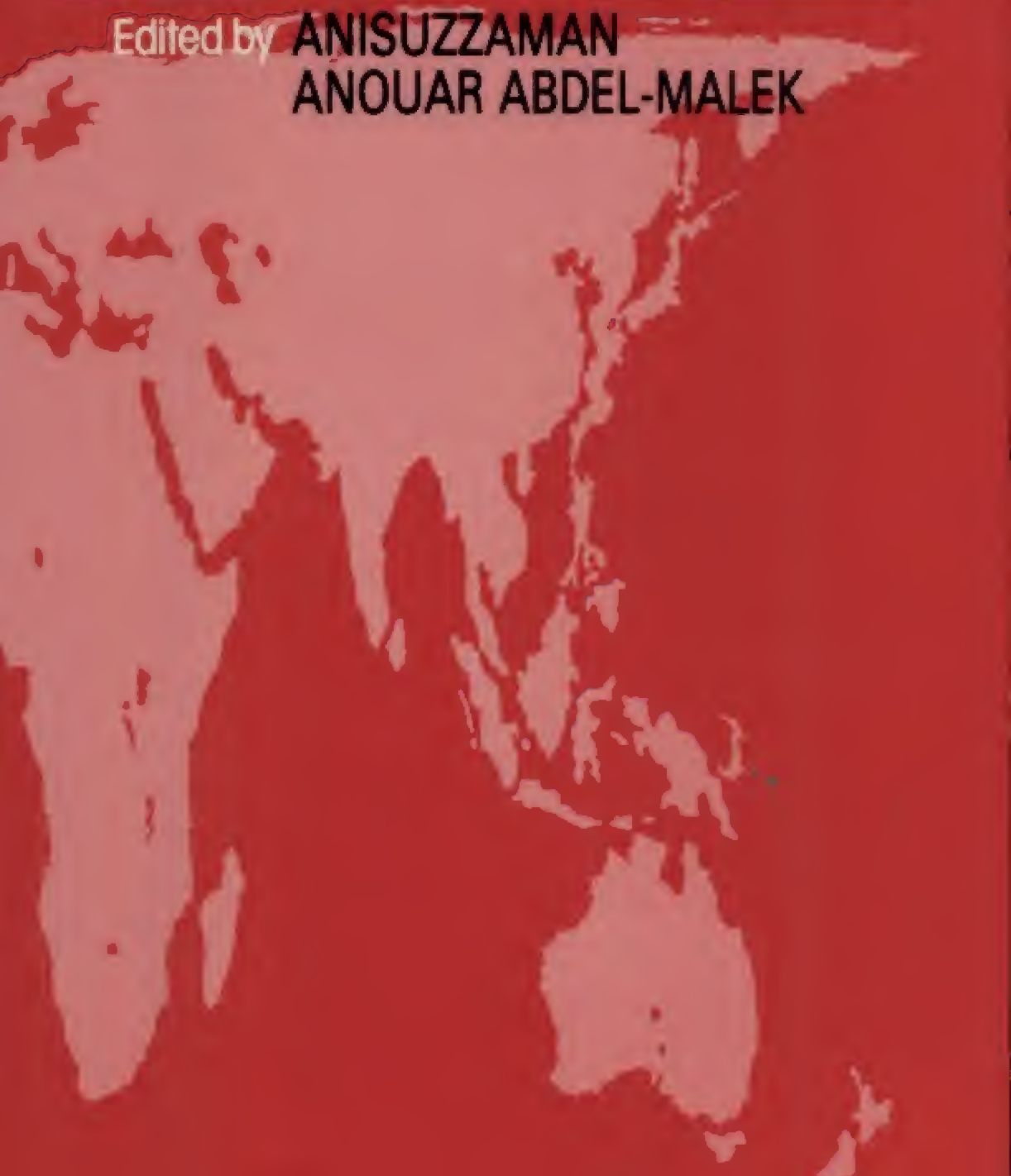
Volume 3 CULTURE AND THOUGHT

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Modernity in Crisis:
The Resurgence of Tradition

At the very beginning of his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948), T. S. Eliot had quoted the definition of the word 'definition' as given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This, indeed, is a remarkable way of clarifying one's position and delimiting the area of one's discourse. Unfortunately, received definitions are not always as adequate or as acceptable as Eliot had found in this particular instance. The same dictionary has an entry on culture: yet he devoted an entire book towards building up its definition.

Scholars in the Algiers Seminar on 'Culture and Thought in the Transformation of the World' found that many terms and concepts used in the social sciences today were ambiguous. Immanuel Wallerstein referred to 'social change' and 'post-revolutionary states', Jorge Serrano to 'transformation' and Øyvind Østerud to 'nation', but almost unanimous charges of ambiguity and inadequacy were levelled at the concepts of 'modern', 'modernity' and 'modernisation'.

Perhaps the reasons are not too far to seek. Some authorities tell us that modern is a matter of, or pertaining to, present and recent time − in particular, the historical period following the Middle Ages. Not only is this explanation dependent on the precise definition of the Middle Ages and determination of the time of their close, but also it tends to put all tendencies − often contradictory ones − appearing in the last five hundred years in the same basket. One of the characteristics of modernity has been identified as the development of a secular and rational outlook, but such outlook is known to have existed before the advent of the 'modern' period. Symptoms of modernity have been seen in the emergence of certain political systems, whereas it has been generally acknowledged that many historically 'traditional' political systems, in fact, had typologically 'modern' structures, attributes and orientations (*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 10, 396, 1968). Modernity has been equated with economic growth without taking into account the question of distribution of wealth, and with the application of the scientific and technical knowledge without any consideration for the utility of the products of such knowledge for the collective good. Modernisation, again, has been defined as 'the current term for an old process − the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies' (*ibid.*, 386). This is a definition heavily loaded in favour of the cultural dimension of the Western world.

The most serious challenge to the prevalent concept of modernity came from Susantha Goonatilake, who termed it as 'an ethnocentric view from a particular era of history and from a particular geographical region' and as 'congealing of some of the ideas of the ruling classes of a particular place and a particular time'. Explaining the position he had taken in his paper, *Modernity in crisis and the resurgence of tradition*, he said:

'Defined narrowly the "period of modernity" refers probably only to the last hundred years or so. Yet the concept of modernity is heir to a broad series of historical developments of half a millennium beginning with the European ascendancy in the world in the sixteenth century. The ethnocentricity of place is broadly from the European continent including its settler-bastions in the Americas and elsewhere. Although the centre was broadly within Europe, the centre of dominance of the European influence shifted from the Iberian peninsula – at the period of mercantile capitalism – to Britain and Western Europe – at the period of industrial capitalism – to the USA – at the period of transnational capitalism of the post-World War II period.

'In this paper, I also imply a broad view of "modernity" beyond the narrowly defined ones of either the post-World War II theories of development with their concepts of modernisation; or the equating of a particular technological progress with modernism, or, for that matter, the ideas surrounding "modernistic" trends in culture, such as those in painting, sculpture and architecture. In a sense I place these narrow implied definitions of modernism whether they cover theories of development, in technology or in the arts as part of a larger cluster; as but a culmination of a long historical unfolding. Modernism becomes a point of apogee, as it were, of the Western hegemony reaching its peak in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and now entering a period of crisis and decay.'

Proceeding to examine the concept of modernity, 'an ideology of a particular time and a particular place unconsciously (or consciously) designed for a particular purpose', Goonatilake demonstrated, on the authority of Jacobson, Jayatilake, Balamoorthy and Johanson, that while some of the concepts in this ideology arose from within the European tradition itself, some of the contributing concepts came from Asia and were selectively chosen by a process of legitimisation within Europe and later stamped as modern. In this connection, he mentioned the similarities between the thoughts of David Hume and the Buddha regarding the self, the attitude of affective neutrality or a lack of strong personal involvement in modern behaviour and the Buddhist code of life, the concept of universalism in modern thought and Buddhism, the development of a bureaucracy – tied to a system of meritocratic promotions based on achievements defined by well-laid-down laws and regulations – in the modern times and that existing among the order of Buddhist monks, the views of personal psyche as defined by Freud, Adler and Jung and those of the unconscious as found in many South Asian schools of thought, and the sexual theme that runs through Freud and its parallel theories of Buddhist and Hindu Tantrists. He also drew

attention to the fact that the pre-colonial world was a veritable seed-bed of different sciences and technologies. Similarly, on the plane of the arts, he noticed the influence of Japanese woodcut on the Impressionists and of African and Oceanic art on Picasso and Braque, the Hindu-Buddhist inspiration in the works of Brancusi, Kandinsky and Klee, and the impact of Japanese architecture on Frank Lloyd Wright.

Having thus established that many aspects of the 'modern' package – in concepts, interpersonal relationships and culture – existed at other places and other times, Goonatilake looked at the question of the growth of the dual concept of tradition and modernity. Here he relied on Bendix, who found that the decisive changes in Western Europe in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, gave rise to the 'master-theme' of tradition and modernity 'which underlies a great diversity of topics and influences our understanding of modern society to this day'.

One of the results of this was seen in the models of development produced in the 1950s and the 1960s by theorists such as Parsons, Smelser, Moore, McClelland, Horovitz, Eisenstadt and Rostow, among others, which reflected their views of developing societies as well as of modernism, as opposed to tradition, as the goal of development. Goonatilake found that their general approach was to treat developing societies in one ideal-type category, the 'traditional', and to equate contemporary Western societies with another category, the 'modern'. These theorists characterised the developing societies as 'ascriptive', 'particularistic' and 'diffuse', and as having a 'kinship nexus of social organisation' that led to rigid social structures. In their views, the peasants, who form the bulk of the population of these traditional societies, have a world view governed by a concept of limited good and the latter's other-worldly religious doctrines do not attach importance to economic goals: the peasantry's inefficient economic activities are governed by purely traditional criteria and, drawn towards urban setting, they find the change disquieting.

Drawing upon the criticisms and studies by Finnegan, Huizer, Inkeles and Smith, Rao, Evers, Wichman and Michael Lipton, Goonatilake showed that empirical facts did not bear out the assertion that kinship played a dominating role in 'primitive' as distinct from 'advanced' societies, nor did it necessarily involve rigidity and ascription; that the values and doctrines in developing societies were flexible and were adjusted to fit into the new ideological frameworks demanded by new socio-economic forces; that better psychic adjustments in urban setting were achieved by the better-educated ones; and that the variety of peasant revolutions from East Europe to China proved that the concept of peasant resistance to change was an erroneous one.

The intellectual tradition arising from a contrast between tradition and modernity has been subject to frequent formulation by many writers. Goonatilake quoted Bendix, who noticed a basic common tendency in all of them:

'The tendency is (1) to treat societies as "natural systems"; (2) to search for the "independent variables" which – if altered initially – will cause changes in the related, but dependent variables in the process of transition from one type to the other; (3) to conceive of the transition as one of the declining tradition and rising modernity; and finally (4) to assume that social change consists of a process that is internal to the society changing.'

Bendix discussed these points in detail and showed that actual societies did not fit these patterns. Bodenheimer exposed the weak scientific foundations of the development theories, particularly, in terms of their application to Latin America. Bernstein criticised the ethnocentricity implied by using the present Western societies as the only destination of modernisation and the reductionism of sociological problems to the psychological field, and objected to the traditional-modern dichotomy as being an inadequate concept both as a descriptive device and as a conceptual device. Andre Gunder Frank criticised the treatment of societies as isolates, separate from the colonial process that made, over some centuries, a massive transfer of wealth to the present modern societies from the present underdeveloped ones. Rhodes argued that emphasis on the traditionalism of developing societies helped shift the responsibility for continued backwardness on to these societies themselves and ignored the partial historical responsibility of the Western world for this backwardness.

Goonatilake then proceeded to point out that the critique of modernism struck home and the development theorists were largely superseded by the dependencia theorists who came into prominence in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Dependencia, he explained, encompassed in its broad perspective the aspirations of the national bourgeoisie as well as other lower classes – as articulated by neo-Marxist theorists. Most Third World governments had accepted a dependencia perspective, at least at a rhetorical level, by the mid-1970s, articulating them at international forums; and the success of oil-exporting countries in raising their price was perceived as a seeming success of theories of dependencia. The new dependencia-inspired revisionism of the modernisation paradigm was, however, to be challenged by new developments at the close of the 1970s.

'The new developments included a redivision of labour in the world with a resultant new type of dependent industrial capitalism in Far Eastern countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. This relocation of industries under the new dimension of labour resulted in some of the most modern industries such as electronics being relocated at havens of repressed labour in Asia with labour of peasant origin doing so-called "modern" jobs.

'A second crucial development was that for the first time since the sixteenth century the beginnings of a cleavage between race and capital had begun to take place because of the enormous earnings of some of the OPEC Middle Eastern countries who were nurtured in a different civilisation setting from those of traditional Europe, namely that of the Arab/Muslim world. Capital and European civilisation, which had been synonymous, were beginning to drift

apart. The third crucial factor which always had existed in the background of the dependencia theorists (who essentially dealt with the capitalist world) was the existence of the socialist bloc. The socialist bloc itself by the mid-1970s, especially after the close of the Vietnam war, had lost the semblance of unity and theorists of different socialist countries were assessing each other's status in the vilest *theoretical* terms, a phenomenon seen most vividly in the Soviet Union-China conflict.

'The outcome of these latter tendencies (and other incipient ones) which challenged the hegemonic view of development once held from the ethno-centricity of a particular time and a particular place, namely the era of European dominance, is yet not clear. The dynamics of the recent changes yet remain to be worked out conceptually.'

All these factors led Goonatilake to conclude that the concept of the modern as a description of a process of change as well as a description of 'modern' artefacts was ephemeral and/or false. All these factors also indicated, in his view, the crisis of modernism:

'The crisis in modernism, being a crisis of the apogee of European civilisation, I also believe, is symptomatic of a deep crisis of confidence of Western civilisation. It is, in addition, a crisis in conceptualisation in both social theory and culture at a time when the Western role of geopolitical policeman is being dislodged, a role which it had assumed over the last few centuries and under which hegemony a blanket of pre-emptive conceptualisation as well as a pre-emptive civilisation was superimposed on the dependent intelligentsia and the dependent countries in the rest of the world.'

To Nadji Safir the crisis was manifested not only in the crisis of development in the North, which seemed to be global, but also in the fact that all values relating to Western civilisation and capitalist accumulation were now being questioned.

Similar views on modernity were expressed in the Seminar by other par-ticipants also. Immanuel Wallerstein pointed out that along with capitalist economy and European expansion came the claim of the Western thinkers that they had found a universal code which might be called modernity, but it turned out to be a forced notion. John Dunn, in the paper he gave in the following section, said that what was to be modern was not to conform to the parochial ideological proclivity of any other society – past, present or future. Gérard Pierre-Charles found that, in Latin America, modernity was seen as the modern form of colonialism. To Ramiro Reynaga modernity as per-ceived in Europe and North America appeared to be crushing the endogeneity of all other nations. Anisuzzaman, in his report, *Tradition and modernity in Bangladesh*, referred to the views of many scholars who held that, in the context of the Indian subcontinent, the endogenous potentials for modernity were frustrated by colonialism which then claimed to play the role of the moderniser. Partha Chatterjee, in the paper he presented in Section II, gave a detailed

account of how, in the colonial context, the coloniser and the moderniser had been seen as one by many nationalist thinkers. That this was a matter not only of the colonial period was demonstrated by Goonatilake, when he pointed out that development theories of doubtful validity were accepted, as in the case of Sri Lanka, as a legitimising factor, accompanying a process of intellectual colonisation. The development view of the West was also called into question, as we shall see later, by both Vladimir Štambuk and Jorge Serrano. Tamas Szentes pointed out that the imitation of the West had failed because, in the context of capitalist economy, with dependence and exploitation, it was bound to fail.

One answer to this problem of conceptualisation has, as Chatterjee cited in his paper, often been suggested: a redefinition of the concept of 'modernity' to suit a non-Western culture, to detach it from a framework of simple analogy with the history of Western enlightenment and reconstruct it within the terms of an entirely different cultural context. He quoted the argument of Rudolph and Rudolph in this connection: 'If tradition and modernity are seen as continuous rather than separated by an abyss, if they are dialectically rather than dichotomously related, and if internal variations are attended to and taken seriously, then those sectors of traditional society that contain or express potentialities for change from dominant norms and structures become critical for understanding the nature and processes of modernisation'. This was, more or less, in the minds of many other speakers in the Seminar who referred time and again to modernity.

E. Jeddi thus proposed that the concept of modernity should be stripped of its colonial connotations and termed the dichotomy of tradition and modernity as a false problem, imposed from outside. Janusz Kuczynski found that the counterposition of tradition and modernity was purely formal. François Rajaoson denied that tradition and modernity were antagonistic. Abdallah Cheriet termed the notion of contradiction between these two as a superficial one. Anouar Abdel-Malek was of the opinion that the 'pseudo-concept' of tradition and modernity was the real problem. And, agreeing with Levine, Gusfield, Barna and Cohn, Goonatilake asserted that not only was traditional culture flexible, but also many of its features could, in fact, contribute to 'modernism'; and that 'modernisation' may be endogenous as well as exogenous, and congruent with tradition as well as discontinuous. In another section of the paper, he tried to furnish the theoretical framework of the multiple views of modernity, to which we shall now turn.

Making what he termed as 'a disaggregated analysis within the Marxist scheme", to take into account the civilisational variety in the world, Goonatilake observed that history progressed by a succession of different modes of production and that historical change occurred as a result of the development of forces of production. Current anthropological researches, he said, indicated that the seminal social organisations from which the larger civilisations emerged were

not homogeneous, nor did they fall into a simple category of primitive classless society. There were different 'starting' modes (or sub-modes) of production and a variety of economic systems in so-called pre-capitalist societies. The real small-scale societies could not, therefore, be seen as homogeneous starting points of civilisation which, subjected to a historical unfolding, would lead into a uniform repetition of sequences of the European flow. Because of the differences in the starting point itself, configurations for the forces of pro- duction in different civilisations could vary. Thus, the ancient American civilisations, with a different starting point, could give rise to settled agriculture, a highly stratified society, a definitive architecture, mathematics and a specific religion without the knowledge of the plough, the wheel and iron, which were essential technological elements in the forces of production in the Asian and European civilisations. Similarly, as the different civilisations grew, one could skip a stage which the other passed through, or go through a stage which was non-existent in the other.

Seen in this perspective, Europe or European civilisation was only a par- ticularistic historical growth of certain configurations in the economic and technological spheres, on the one hand, and the political, social and cultural, on the other. Such configurations, in general, were related to each other in a totalistic fashion and formed an integrated whole, with economic relations being the substratum on which the political, social, cultural and other arrangements rested.

Taking this view of specificity, it would appear that there are different types of modernity and tradition and both the concepts needed to be seen in the plural. Different combinations of specificity and generality have emerged in different civilisations at regional and global levels. Traditions are, thus, changing continuously, even if they retain some essential characteristics. The question of the dialectics between tradition and modernity, or that of the resurgence of traditions, has to be considered in this context.

Nadji Safir's paper on *Tradition et modernité face au développement* aimed at studying the multiple processes of dialectics between tradition and modernity, especially in their relations to the question of development. In Safir's view, modernity had operated as a system of values emanating from Western societies and articulating itself around the rationality and the vision of the world of those societies. In the West, too, the dialectics of tradition and modernity had been at work, but these had emerged from their own history in the interaction of two self-produced entities. The case of the Third World was different, in that modernity was imposed on the colonies by the West. Although confrontations between civilisations had taken place in the past, nothing was comparable to the impact of the West on the rest of the world from the sixteenth century onwards, for here was a situation for the first time which presented not merely a confrontation of civilisations, but the problem of the appropriation of the rest

of the world by one civilisation — as if a totalitarian logic was at work that denied the existence of any partner in a dialogue.

The new system of values was not, however, implanted on a virgin soil. Societies which received this system had the natural basis of their own values. While the justification of imposing modernity was seen in its efficacy to see the world as it was and to face problems, the legitimacy of tradition — a set of norms, values and institutions around which a large consensus was formed — could be seen in the concrete manifestation of the historical process through which a given society passed from its origin. Tradition, Safir pointed out, was more understood and became more apparent in its confrontation with something that was exogenous to the tradition. Facing the challenge of the exogenous, tradition adopted, in accordance with its means at various points of time, different strategies of response.

One strategy was by presenting itself as the sole refuge of the national personality in the face of aggression. To meet the colonial problematique of the negation of the national identity of the colonised by eliminating their history, tradition would claim itself as the only heir to the historical process the society has passed through. In this attempt, tradition could affirm itself in both the positive and the negative ways. The total acceptance of everything connected with tradition and rejection of all that came from outside could lead to a process of sclerosis and degradation of tradition that eventually tended to end up by setting norms, values and institutions which were gradually becoming disconnected with the changes occurring in the society and, thus, effecting a rupture in the social consensus.

The conflict of tradition and modernity also underwent a change of status when the antagonism between endogeneity and exogeneity turned into that between two parts of the colonised society. The wide consensus around the process of political liberation strengthened the forces of modernity in the reaffirmation of their will to lead and, on the other hand, it set the process of recuperation and affirmation of the cultural identity.

The new national problematique of opposition between tradition and modernity, according to Safir, was characterised, before anything else, by their relations to development. Since the relations between development and modernity were complementary, importance was attached to that dimension through which modernity could assume full powers: the dimension of economy, to the neglect of the cultural dimension. There lay the root of economism that had characterised development policies in the Third World. It was conceived that the economy would be the motor of all other dimensions of society. However, it proved to be an illusion.

From the point of view of tradition, development was seen as a huge aggression on all sides. What at first appeared to be dealing strictly with economic aspects later tended to include all sectors of all social activities. Knowing, as it did, that development was a complex task to be confronted sooner or later and that such confrontations eventually led to a confrontation

with modernity itself, tradition formulated a strategy in two phases: the first was one of adaptation and the second was one of taking the offensive.

Since tradition could not oppose the main social programme of modernity – which was development – it tried to absorb the shock without causing too much damage to itself and wait for a better time that would unfold itself with the problematique of continuity. The field was thus left, for the time being, to modernity for playing its role.

The cultural values which had carried development policies fundamentally appeared to be those of Western economic rationality in its largest sense, and, for a long time, development was perceived also as a process of diffusion and imposition of values emanating from societies which were considered to be 'performing', and were thus taken as examples. And, soon after, it was considered that the only solution for modernity lay in the formulation of a global cultural project. This, however, could not go hand in hand with the task of the recuperation of national identity which the victors of a process of political liberation were committed to address themselves to.

Tradition now appeared in its phase of the offensive and characterised by a global vision. In this vision the problem was no longer that of adapting oneself whenever one was solicited from the outside, but that of formulating a problematique from which the outside would be solicited. This constituted more than a simple change of attitude on the part of tradition. For a long time modernity had forced tradition to join in a race, imposing its norms as the better means, and challenging tradition to reach the goal. Now tradition affirmed the superiority of its own system of values and wanted to impose its norms on modernity. It now used a logic similar to the one adopted by modernity on the question of development: it proposed solutions without taking into account the evolution of society by which an economic rationality of a new type had already acquired a social basis. The new problematique was thus leading to deadlocks or partial solutions of the problems.

The real problem, Safir felt, lay beyond tradition and modernity – notions which were very relative – in the domain of relation between culture and development. For a long time the prevalent vision of development had left culture with a minor role, but genuine development or, for that matter, universality could only be reached on the basis of authenticity in which the role of culture was not negligible.

Goonatilake looked at the problem from a somewhat different angle. He found that attempts at a resurgence of tradition had occurred in spite of a continuing attempt at cultural colonisation taking place through such factors as the media and consumption patterns legitimised at the centre, although, at the deepest layer, it was the economic forces that governed the process. He said:

'Yet, in spite of the continued cultural colonisation, there have been frequent attempts at resurgence of tradition – for example, in the case of South Asia

the attempts of both the Gandhi movement and the Buddhist revival, and in the case of the present Middle East the Islamic revival. These "revivalist" movements were often responses to the dominating influences which were tied to the foreign presence. Local class structures were not static but had a dynamic which threw up opposition embodied in other social groups not tied to the colonial presence. This, for example, occurred in the case of South Asia in the Hindu and Buddhist revivals, which were located socially in an incipient national bourgeoisie and a rural petty bourgeoisie, and thus were socially in opposition to the "comprador" bourgeoisie, who were intimately tied to foreign capital.

'It is therefore clear that attempts at revival of tradition by itself without taking into account the social dynamics and the infrastructure of economic relations are bound to face failure. In the case of many Islamic countries the current revival has begun from a position of economic strength which allows a degree of independence. Yet here, too, class dynamics of the Islamic countries "filter" the Islamic revival. Thus, the new Islamic States vary in nature from "feudal" ones such as Saudi Arabia to radically socially oriented Islamic ones such as Libya to those of a more conventional "socialist" pattern such as Algeria. Therefore, even the present Islamic revival under the aegis of relative economic strength would vary according to many socio-economic factors.'

Goonatilake stressed the necessity of having a set of clear conceptual tools to view the resurgence and continuation of tradition under different civilisational contexts − not only to understand the civilisational processes at work but also to identify the different strategies that could be employed in carving out a resurgence of tradition.

Both Tamas Szentes, who presented his paper in Section II, and Janusz Kuczynski, who gave his paper in Section IV, had points to make on this question. Kuczynski recognised that the quest for tradition in all parts of the world had become essential, but he felt that the "resurgence of tradition" should be historically new, for mere return to the sources could not be the solution of the day. Traditions were just a basis, but they must become a mutual source of inspiration for a new integration on a world scale, where, through the dialogue of cultures and partnership and through the dialectics of individuality and community and of nations and mankind, all that was capable of finding a place in a harmonious union with the new order and new dialectics would survive. This could be achieved through the removal of antinomy of traditional particularisms and the attainment of a new and true universalism. In Kuczynski's views, no political or even cultural tradition could become an absolute ruler and, at the same time, each of the essential traditions needed to be raised to the level of 'co-governing the world'. According to Szentes, the efforts to revive traditional ideologies might express strong emotions against colonialism and foreign capitalism, or a manipulation with such feelings and an apology for the 'traditional' inequalities and oppressive leaderships. Abdallah Cheriet, for one, strongly felt that such was the case with many Muslim countries today. Although revolutions in these countries were generally viewed in the West as

desires to live with traditions, he thought that these were, in fact, revolts against foreign dominations and domestic wastages. At the same time, he agreed that traditions always held both positive and negative aspects. Syed Husain Ali took a middle position, and stressed the need of finding out the means of combining the positive aspects of tradition and those of modernity. Abdallah Cheriet, again, pointed out that drawing the line between the positive and negative aspects of traditions was difficult. John Dunn's paper referred to the problem not only of identifying the positive and negative aspects of modernity, but also of avoiding the latter while accepting the former. And Anisuzzaman, drawing upon the experiences of Bangladesh, said that there were both external and internal constraints to a meaningful integration of tradition and modernity.

In presenting his report on two workshops held at the University of Chittagong on *Creativity and the integration of traditions and modern attitudes, with special reference to Bangladesh and the Indian subcontinent*, Anisuzzaman stressed the point that, 'in the modern view of the world, man stands in the centre, his life herein is considered important, and he is imbued with a spirit of scientific enquiry'. Modern attitudes, no doubt, reflected themselves in the desire to change traditional views, values and institutions, in order to come to terms with the changing times, but changes thus aimed at needed to be based on scientific analysis and perception and they needed to be beneficial for the entire population of a given society – and not for any particular segment – in their pursuit of a better life. Such changes, he felt, could only be made by the people themselves. Traditions in the subcontinent carried within themselves elements that impeded or favoured the mobilisation of the people for such purposes.

The report referred to both the divisive and the unifying forces in the traditions. The first included class distinction, urban-rural cleavage and religious differences; while the second consisted of the tradition of revolts against injustices of a given system (illustrated by religious conversions and peasant revolts) and that of religious toleration and liberal humanism.

The workshops rejected the notions, often held, that the existence of traditional social institutions and the fast rate of growth of population in the subcontinent were responsible for its backwardness. The instances of Japanese clan organisation and of the faster growth of European population between 1871 and 1911 were cited to discard the validity of such theories. Supplementing these comparisons with evidence from history, a view was forcefully expressed in the workshops that there was a definite move in the eighteenth century towards a higher level of economy and that the intellectual climate of the period was also favourable for a change of the old order, but such potentials for an endogenous development were thwarted by the advent of colonialism.

Modernisation, in the colonial context, it was pointed out, 'became a process in which spontaneous historical force of modernity was lost, dependence on external stimuli developed and progressive potentials for independent strength

were impeded'.

'The intellectual creativity in the colonial period, despite its splendour, a new sense of awakening, was more like a grafting than a growth: for its inspiration came from Western education and the very source of its inspiration created an unbridgeable gap between those who had had the opportunity of receiving Western education and those who did not have that. This, combined with other factors, led to a socio-cultural dualism: limited "modernity" for the upper strata of the society, while the masses lived, as it were, in the historic past.'

Since the departure of the colonialists, however, the report went on, 'there has been no transformation, so to say, from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, which really signifies a change of the old order'. A principal factor in this state of affairs was 'the fact that the pattern of the colonial economy persisted even after the area got rid of the colonial rule'. Reference was made in this connection to the international division of labour and to the continued dependence of Bangladesh on foreign aid. 'This dependency relation', it was further pointed out, 'has its parallel in and connection with a dependency relationship existing within the economy'.

In the religious view of life that dominated Bangladesh society, the solution of problems lay in returning to the pristine purity of Islam. While the idea awaited creative elaboration, its critics pointed out that this view rejected not only much of the modernity but also much of the traditions that emanated from local but pre-Muslim cultures, and that the effective use of a religious framework in a multidimensional society such as Bangladesh posed a problem. Many secularists, who belonged to the other view of life that had influenced a great deal of thought and action in Bangladesh, thought that the solution lay in pressing scientific knowledge into service, but the possibility seemed to be remote, because of situations both internal and external.

It was pointed out at the workshops that one-third of the countries of the world, having less than a third of world population, possess practically 97 per cent of world science. The multinational corporations' monopoly prevents small nations from reaping the benefit of scientific knowledge which is universal. The external influence also makes the developing countries import technologies which are hardly suitable for them. On the other hand, the capability of under-developed nations of making use of scientific knowledge is limited, as also seems to be their will to do so. Without a system of universal education and scientific and technological orientations, it is not possible to introduce the fruits of scientific development. Bangladesh, for one, is miserably lagging behind in providing for a universal education and her system of science education is even less than adequate. A participant lamented that in our educational institutions, pre-Newtonian science is taught with a pre-Darwinian attitude. The fact that the State of Bangladesh supports two parallel systems of education – one traditional and the other supposed to be modern – is an indication that traditions and modernity are not expected to meet. Reviewing the state of the modern system

of education, a scholar remorsefully concluded that education has little scope to influence the transformation of society from the traditional to the modern way of life as we conceive it. Some others were not surprised that such was the case. In their view, education has contributed to progress despite the intentions of the ruling classes, who determine the nature, content and extent of education. Can education policy help bring economic and social justice while agricultural or industrial policies create conditions to the contrary, they asked.

Thus, the need for a reorganisation of the forces and relations of production, which was greatly emphasised at the workshops, became very much involved with the question of restructuring the power base. It was stressed that the continuity, especially the degree of continuity, in development or underdevelopment of a nation was determined by its power structure, which could also effectively deal with external constraints. The possibility of a meaningful integration of traditions and modernity, and of a social transformation, seemed remote without a basic change in the power structure.

Vladimir Štambuk devoted his paper, *Power: a tool of modernity*, to this very question of power structure, because he felt that:

'The changing social settings in our century, the advent of socialism, the existence of developing countries, the search for new ways and modes of development, the needs for new social goals and instruments for their realisation put forward the need to rethink and reshape the essence and practice of power in contemporary societies.'

Štambuk started with the observation that power was a product of social forces and social processes, and that there were two approaches concerning power in society. According to the first, power was generated in the situation of scarcity and it thus emanated from the coercive possibility of rearranging and dividing socially produced value to suit the wishes and needs of élite groups. The second approach looked upon power as a resultant of different social forces and as an interplay of different social groups and interests which was effected through suffrage mechanism. These two forms of power, both socially finite in their concept and practice, were products of different historical settings: while the first existed in pre-capitalist societies and in the developing phases of capitalism, mature and developed capitalist societies had opted for the latter.

Štambuk explained that, throughout history, power was the instrument of division as well as of integration of a given society. The division was necessary for the concentration of wealth and human resources to facilitate their use and misuse by the classes in power. Social conflicts, emerging as a result of the division of society into two classes (haves and have-nots), led to new division and reshaping of power. The division was also necessary to effect an integration that ensured social development. Such divisions were valid as long as no part of a given society took upon itself, in an organised manner, to question the power division. Thus, the relation between integration and division, a changing and a fluctuating one, was important.

In pre-capitalist and early capitalist periods, the coercive characteristic of power was more salient and conspicuous because the necessary integration was harder to achieve. Owing to the technological advancement and the overall enrichment resulting from the harsh exploitation of labour in previous periods and the continuous pillage of the colonies, the working conditions improved in the later phase of capitalism. Although the exploitation continued and was augmented, the immediate harshness lessened, and this led to a new structure of power built on elections. This gave rise to a more democratic and less coercive institution, under the condition that the basic economic coerciveness which had now come to the fore was not questioned.

Štambuk then came to the core of his questions:

'One of the main questions which is confronting developing countries today is whether this kind of "democratic" division of power suits their social situation and their development goals? What sort of integration do these countries need, and what are the bases of integration they have? Can endogenous forces prosper in the framework of such "democratic" division of power? Is power as a coercive instrument of integration acceptable for developing countries? Is power a tool of modernity for developing countries and their societies?'

The relevance of these questions for the developing countries, according to Štambuk, lay in the fact that their liberation from colonialism was achieved through the participation (political or armed) of a very large conglomerate of political forces. If differences were acceptable in the struggle for national liberations, two reasons made it impossible to shake off the complex political structure ensuing from that struggle: first, different political aspirations had manifested themselves and gained legitimacy; and, second, successful participation in the liberation struggle ensured the obligation and the right to participate in the power structure of the new nation.

In such a context, power was related neither to the amount of goods nor to the number of votes, but emanated from the role an individual or a group had played in the struggle for liberation and from the support given by different segments of society, in a situation where the society was not structured on the basis of a dominant coercive criterion. In such a situation, the emergence of a new democratic structure of power was a must.

The economic goals of developing countries, Štambuk said, were mostly seen in the developed ones as economic growth, while in the developing countries themselves this was seen as development. Economic growth described the economic problems of developing countries as quantitative: more goods and more production. The concept of development entailed change not only in quantity, but also in quality. The growing needs of growing populations in these countries, Štambuk suggested, could not be met only by larger production. A fast growth had to be achieved, but, at the same time, the socio-economic structure and relations inherited from the colonial masters had to be changed. It was therefore necessary to develop 'autochthonous, endogenous, but not autarkic, socio-economic relations' which necessitated an active and conscious

participation of the majority of the people. And, he added, an 'active and conscious participation cannot be realised if the structure of power divides the population in groups of those who can decide and therefore take an active part in social processes and those who have to follow'. Štambuk proceeded to assert that:

'. . . without the development of creative potentials and value systems which correspond with the needs and possibilities of every nation, the criteria of development, the criteria of goal-setting can only be imported from developed countries. If values and goals of developing countries represent only replicas of those existing in developed countries, then the structure of power, the mode of life, the production of new values, in one word, everything will be just a replica of the existing reality in the developed countries. Developing countries using the achievements of the developed countries, cross-fertilising them with their own cultural experiences, can contrive their own future . . . To develop creativity, a society has to develop its own human resources. Therefore, if developing countries wish to achieve not only political, but also economic and cultural independence and equality with developed countries, then development of endogenous creativity, of endogenous value, is a must. Development of endogenous value system entails the development of endogenous structure of power, of specific national integration factors.'

Štambuk argued that external coercion could not produce acceptable results where social development was dependent on the conscious participation of the majority of the people, and only endogenous coercion – i.e. the individual and group motivations – could produce the desired results. In this situation, power was not rooted either in the scarcity of goods or in the availability of votes which, in either case, made it finite, but was rooted in the wealth of labour which made it unlimited. He conceded that such a situation, in its pure form, did not exist. Since, however, the models of power structures of developed countries were unacceptable and unworkable, and since new goals and means were to be devised for the developing countries, such a concept of power structure was neither illogical nor absurd.

The concept in which power was not divided but aggregated on the basis of productive labour was called by Štambuk *associated power.* 'Societies which have to lean on the support of peasants and industrial producers as social forces which will realise a given social development cannot tolerate a division of the society, cannot tolerate a division of power. Their development, their future, is based on co-operation, on association of producers in different fields.' It would take a long time, he agreed, to develop, enrich and promulgate associated power, but he found that the process had already started. Certain forms of the pulling together of labour and power existed in some developing countries, such as in the various forms of self-management. The situation in which peasants and workers took in their own hands the processes of decision-making and in that way integrated their resources – material, intellectual and creative – was the base on which they could hopefully become masters of their own products

and their own destiny.'

Max Mmuya, as we shall see later, had a similar if not the same point to make. What was self-management to Štambuk became self-reliance to Mmuya, but he also laid great stress on the role of ideology in making such efforts successful. And François Rajaoson was of the view that both in the management of the developing countries and in the formulation and dissemination of ideologies intellectuals had a great role to play.

In his paper entitled *Les intellectuels dans les sociétés en transition*, Rajaoson concentrated on the role of intellectuals in the social transformation of developing countries, with special reference to Madagascar. As the fringe of active population who did not work manually but dealt with symbolic activities emanating from the mind, the intellectuals could, he felt, contribute to the construction of a humane society and, in the perspective of the transformation of the world, too, play a major role. This was, however, dependent on the system of education which contributed to social reproduction by its impact on the development of production forces through the training of the manpower, and on the superstructure through the production and dissemination of knowledge and ideology. At the apex of the education system was the university, the 'locus of regulation of culture and knowledge at the highest level' and the place of the formation of the intellectuals.

Tracing the development of the university from the Middle Ages, when centres of education used to function under the aegis of the dominant religion, through the period when, in order to strengthen the Church, the State entered the scene, and when, with the rise of the city, the university came to be located there but continued to be controlled by the religious authorities, Rajaoson referred to the change that the university underwent with the advent of the bourgeoisie, who were anxious to produce executive cadres and highly specialised technicians to make their system work. Thus, as the industrial and agricultural revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed the relations of production from the feudal to the capitalistic, an education for efficacy was added to that for classical knowledge.

Turning to the situation in Africa, Rajaoson noted that, apart from a few of the Islamic countries, higher education was a comparatively new phenomenon in Africa, where the colonialists organised their own system of education to meet the need of trained people who could carry out the functions allocated to them by the colonialists. After World War II the industrial scene witnessed the phenomenon of delocalisation of production by the multinationals; and national executives were now needed to support such delocalisation and to provide, as well, the nucleus of the administrators for the newly independent countries. These two factors led to the founding of the first universities in Black Africa, such as the one in Madagascar, which came into being in 1961. At the level of knowledge also, the same phenomenon of delocalisation could be noted: the orientation and contents of the syllabuses were heavily foreign and

so were the teaching staff. Added to these factors was the impact of higher education of African students in Western Europe and the USA, and, since the 1960s, in socialist countries, which brought in its wake the problem of brain-drain, which the African countries had not been able to overcome. Even after independence, the situation hardly altered: the university, which continued to be the major centre for training the cadres, also continued to be largely a copy of the Western university and it became a basic problem to develop an independent culture under these conditions. Militancy appeared as an answer to this challenge, and the intellectuals came to play an important role there.

But the intellectuals, Rajaoson pointed out, had never acted unanimously, whether in the colonial period or after. Their attitudes had been various and varying. During the colonial times their attitudes could be seen in their acquisition of European knowledge and culture, in the dialectics of the black and the white, and in their engagement in political activities. The first generation of Malgache intellectuals appeared on the scene in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the confrontation of the European cultural model and the traditional social structure was reinforced by the introduction of Christianity and the development of modern-type schools. The colonial system of education, installed by General Galliéni, went to the privilege of the children of the local chiefs and those who assimilated the Western way of life. The intellectuals of the time adopted three distinct attitudes towards the colonial rule. Those who benefited, such as the civil servants, by a few socio-economic privileges, tried to be neutral, though it was difficult to practise neutrality in times of crises. Some well-off local people, who could gain French citizenship in accordance with established criteria, pursued a course of assimilation and, in the process, completely denied their origins and even needed interpreters to speak to their own people. History had, however, shown the inadequacy of the policy of assimilation, and Albert Memmi had, in his *Portrait du Colonisé*, observed poignantly: 'The individual disappears in his transcendence and the tragedy goes on. Assimilation, to have a meaning and an impact, should be applicable to the entire population, i.e. the whole colonial condition has to be modified'. Finally, some intellectuals demonstrated a conscious reaction against colonialism through speeches, writings and direct participation in the movement for national liberation.

After decolonisation, too, Rajaoson went on, intellectuals adopted different attitudes, depending on their appreciation of the contents of independence. By the contents of independence was meant, Rajaoson explained, the manner of gaining it: whether it was obtained through a popular armed struggle directed by a national liberation front (as was the case with Vietnam or Algeria) or was granted by the colonial power in anticipation of the rise of national liberation movements (such as in French Black Africa or in Madagascar after the referendum of 1958), which varied with the pacifist or non-pacifist phase of the colonial metropolis at the time of decolonisation. In the case of Madagascar, an armed confrontation took place and led to a formal independence —

inasmuch as the decolonised Black African countries became independent, with links to the former colonial power through the so-called 'Agreements of Co-operation'.

The different positions taken by Malgache intellectuals, trained in national and foreign universities, were not only prompted by their appreciation of the contents of independence, but also conditioned by their place at the socio-economic level. Many intellectuals, having fully comprehended the limits of the contents of formal independence, chose to work in the administration, often in the hope of remaining 'neutral' and working in the interests of the State. One was, however, reminded that the supposedly neutral administration had loyally served the colonial regime in the past and that it was difficult for an intellectual, having been in a position to understand all dimensions of socio-economic reality, to stay neutral. Some other intellectuals, such as the cadres in the private and liberal sectors, having only the financial advantages in view, tended to remain 'indifferent'. History, again, had shown that these people ceased to be indifferent as soon as their privileges came to be threatened. A third group actively joined the ruling party, either from the sincere conviction that the activities of the party were in agreement with their own analyses of the situation or in the hope of improving their own material life: for it was well known that, in all regimes, the ruling party tried to accord privileges to their militants. Some intellectuals joined opposition groups, including the party to which the Marxist intellectual belonged. A few others acted through contributing articles to the newspapers. Besides these were the young Malagasies who were sent to France in the hope that they would form the cadres the country needed and had stayed abroad for political or personal considerations. In any case, choosing to go into exile always went against the interests of the country and only aggravated the problem of brain-drain.

Social revolutions, Rajaoson reminded, led to cultural revolutions, and attainment of independence involved cultural novations. These gave rise to the problem of controlling the production of knowledge. And it was in this context that the role of intellectuals assumed paramount importance. Taking into account their potentials for cultural novation and their influence on the popular masses, who were usually eager for greater knowledge and change, the intellectuals could positively act in the implementation and control of the education system, in the production and dissemination of knowledge and new ideas, in giving life to socio-political organisations and in contributing their full share in the management and development of different sectors of national life. On the other hand, despite being the conscious elements of society and understanding the complexities of historical situations, the intellectuals were also capable of adopting an individualistic and opportunistic attitude which could be an obstacle to their adherence to and participation in a common endeavour.

The intellectuals are, as Rajaoson puts it, catalysers of social transformations,

but their role is limited by several factors, such as their socio-economic position, their appreciation of a given situation and their personal motivation. One may add to these factors the limitation of their comprehension and experience and a sense of superiority which they often suffer from. In their interaction with society they also come across people whose activities may be directed by a similar, if not the same, set of limitations. It is not surprising, therefore, that often the views of those who want to bring about transformations and those who are directly affected by such efforts come into conflict.

In Algeria, for instance, as Ahmed Ben-Naoum reported in his paper on *Les nomades à l'epreuve du développement,* 'the productivist logics of the planners and decision-makers regarding developmentalist investments' were in conflict with the logics of the nomads 'inasmuch as the latter were expressed in contra-dictory manners, conservative cultural reflexes and speculative economic behaviours'.

Nomadism in Algeria, until the second half of the nineteenth century, concerned not only those who actually practised it, but also the sedentary people in the countryside and towns and the people from the mountains. French colonisation of the country reduced nomadism to its simplest manifestation: living under tent, leading the sheep and moving, with small consequences, over 20 to 30 million hectares of pastures between the North Algerian Sahara and the Tellian Atlas in the South. The South, which was the domain of the nomads, was not economically 'colonisable' and one could not live there: the area was still administered by the 'Officiers des Affaires Indigènes', while the North was divided into departments directly administered by the Colonial metropolis. It was always easier to take a town than a tribe, whose strength came from the utmost mobility not only of their warriors, but also of the whole society. The political and administrative doctrine adopted in 1842 aimed at repudiating the Ottoman administration and reducing the powers and territorial authority of the tribal chiefs. Special measures were thus taken to forbid the access of the nomads to cereals in the North, sharpen rivalries between the chiefs, divide them and control their movements. Estate laws regarding private property, land survey and determination of territorial limits of every tribe and within each tribe were applied. Types of property, irrelevant to both the coloniser and nomads, were created, and codes of exchange developed and used for centuries were to disappear in a few decades. All these factors led to anarchy among the nomads and the loss of the nomads' old logic of management and exploitation of resources, the cohesiveness and efficacy of which took into account the knowledge of the climate, landscape, soil and cycle of vegetation and 'cultural investment of space'. To these deprivations were added cultural, political and religious repercussions.

By the early twentieth century, Ben-Naoum recounted, the nomads had become impoverished and isolated and had lost their old economic and cultural reflexes. They had turned into producers working primarily for the market

and not principally their own needs. At that time, millions of sheep were bought on the steppe across the Mediterranean and sent to supply the slaughter-houses and the wool and leather industries in Marseille and the South of France. This was a rupture of millenary links between the nomads and the sedentary population of the North; and another rupture was brought upon by settling the sheep on the same pasture land the whole year round. The consequences of these measures for the nomads were beyond comprehension.

One of the most efficient measures adopted, following the independence of the country, was the minesweeping of frontier regions and 'forbidden zones'. For the nomads, however, the war had continued because of their total ignorance of mined fields. When action was taken, it was done without consulting them, although they had welcomed all measures relating to the availability of water.

In the first years of independence, Ben-Naoum said, the question of increasing ovine production was raised owing to a continuous rise in the demand and huge investments were, accordingly, made on the basis of pre-established choices and decisions in which the nomads had no say. Nomadism was also considered by some experts as a feature of underdevelopment which had to disappear. Thus, the investments, coupled with the political will to sedentarise the nomads, resulted in an acceleration of sedentarisation while the sedentarised nomads were, at the same time, expected to continue raising sheep. Together with sedentarisation came the exodus to the North by the small land-holding nomads. The great majority of them, having been ruined by a market they did not control, finally settled on the outskirts of the towns.

In launching the agrarian revolution in its first phase, the colonial estate laws were abolished and, in the new perspective of building the Algerian State, nomadism was nationalised: there came the end of collective property and tribal territory. In the second phase of the revolution, the area of individual ownership of land was restricted: this led to objective constraints which neither the State nor the nomads could overcome. Though the exemption of taxes was decided on with the third phase, the nomads were still distrustful of all that had not come from themselves. The new market economy and practices had developed new reflexes: to invest in fodders and reflect the value of the investment on the sales price to sheep-dealers, which was an anti-economic measure in that the free pasture lands would only be partially used. Other speculative behaviours could be observed in accumulations aimed at overcoming the periods of famines. Such accumulations also enabled the nomads to sedentarise in better conditions.

It was mainly the quadrennial plans and their inherent investments, Ben-Naoum observed, which had led to the accelerated disappearance of nomadism. Local market towns had, within a span of ten years, become important centres of administration, culture and politics. Having been attracted by such centres, the nomads had come there looking for jobs and eventually sedentarised in worse conditions. Education of children, which was a prevailing reason for sedentarising, was little assured and often interrupted.

The economic behaviour of those, rich or poor, who had remained in the steppes, was still the same. Their aim was to meet their needs; and the profits, instead of being reinvested, were accumulated and temporarily sterilised. Rich shepherds would naturally tend to increase the number of their sheep. Shepherds' villages, which were areas of relative sedentarisation, had bound the nomads to a restricted territory, to the loss of pasture lands. While the logic of nomadism lay in the conservation of pasture lands through the knowledge of the climate, soil, plants and the like, they had now become preoccupied with wells, fodders and prices.

The nationalisation of pasture lands, Ben-Naoum continued, led to a series of long-term actions: prevention of the advance of desert by growing forests, multiplication of points of water, building steppe villages and organising co-operatives for raising stock – each co-operative having been allocated a number of hectares in enclosures. Here, again, sedentarisation of animal stock would quickly lead to a lowering of the production of fodders in the steppes that had been already damaged.

Decisions aimed at uniting different tribes to live together revived the problem of factionalism of tribes separated from their territories. The decision-makers had not taken into account the fact that a tribe was inseparable from its territory, which had a history that was inseparable from the history of the community itself.

Even if the nomads did refer to a value scale more and more based on a negative appreciation of their own self and on an overestimated notion of the advantages of sedentarisation, they had maintained an attitude of resistance to, and distrust of, all that was not theirs and did not proceed from them.

It was illusory to imagine that the social and cultural structure of the nomad system could be maintained, while giving them an economic logic that denied the fundamentals of their way of life; as it was naïve to believe that the nomads would willingly agree to experiments, without having decided themselves, that would lead to an increasing production of sheep. However, every ten years, droughts reminded everyone that the shepherds, by themselves, were inadequate to face natural catastrophes, and that the State had had to take extraordinary measures and spend huge amounts of money to save the starving nomads and their sheep. Nomads, indeed, were no longer the farsighted planners they used to be.

The nomad in Algeria, the peasant in Bangladesh and the worker in Sri Lanka share with the intellectual in Madagascar and the white collar worker in another country a world in which human endeavours have worked wonders. Still, many of them have woefully realised the limits of their own endeavours in improving the conditions they live in. The fact of man's continuous conquest of Nature appears to them like the pages of a fairy tale which only deepen their sense of misery. For them there has been no transition from want to freedom.

To achieve that kind of a transformation, it was stressed at the session, the

structures of domination will have to be removed: structures that make possible not only the domination of one nation by another, but also the domination by one segment of society of another within the same national formation. The task set was by no means an easy one: to develop and to distribute equitably the fruits of development, to blend the national and the international, to arrive at universality through specificity, to let a hundred flowers bloom to have the full garden.

During the debate on the problems of conceptualisation, it was suggested that the term 'modernism' could be used to describe the hegemonic type and 'modernity' to mean the type arrived at through critical mediation. Behind the suggestion lay the wishes that went beyond the debate on conceptualisation and terminology. It rejected the uncritical imitation of a dominant culture and also the blind tracking back to the past. It underscored the need for a deeper appreciation of national traditions, as well as a full comprehension of human achievements all over the world: the need for a cross-fertilisation of concepts and ideas and results of empirical research to provide an objective basis on which each national area could formulate strategies of its own transformation, and, thereby, bring about the transformation of the world. Culture and thought were seen as effective vehicles to arrive at the goal.